II. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all previous listings of the claims.

1. (Currently amended)   A method of communicating over a network, the method comprising:

obtaining a set of rules for classifying messages on a client;

providing a message on the client to be sent to a server;

classifying the message on the client based on the set of rules; and

sending the message to the server based on the message classification, wherein the message classification determines how the message is routed for processing at the server.

2. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the providing step comprises generating the message.

3. (Original)   The method of claim 1, further comprising periodically requesting an updated set of rules from the server.

4. (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the classifying step includes matching an attribute of the message with at least one of the set of rules.

5. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising adjusting a communications protocol port for the message based on the classification prior to the sending step.

6. (Original)   The method of claim 1, further comprising opening a connection with the server for the message.

7. (Original)   The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving a response message from the server.

8. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 7, wherein the classified message and the response message are communicated over a first communications protocol port, and wherein the first communications protocol port is not a default communications protocol port.

9. (Original)   The method of claim 1, further comprising separately monitoring a plurality of ports on the server for messages.

10. (Currently amended)   A method of communicating over a network, the method comprising:

creating a set of rules for classifying messages, wherein a classification of a message determines how the message is routed for processing at a server;

providing the set of rules to a client; and

separately monitoring on [[a]] the server for classified messages having one of a plurality of message classifications based on the set of rules.

11. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 10, further comprising receiving a classified message from the client through a unique communications protocol port.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising:

    processing the classified message; and

    sending a response message to the client.

13. (Original) The method of claim 10, further comprising opening a connection with the client.

14. (Original) The method of claim 10, further comprising:

    receiving a request from the client for an updated set of rules; and

    sending the updated set of rules to the client.

15. (Currently amended)   A system for communicating over a network, the system comprising:

    a rules system for managing a set of rules for classifying messages, wherein a classification of a message determines how the message is routed for processing at a server;

    an update system for providing the set of rules to a client; and

    a plurality of monitoring systems, wherein each monitoring system monitors for messages having a unique message classification.

16. (Original) The system of claim 15, further comprising a plurality of processing systems, wherein each processing system processes messages having a unique message classification.

17. (Original) The system of claim 15, further comprising a classification system for classifying messages on a client.

18. (Original) The system of claim 15, further comprising a maintenance system for periodically requesting the set of rules from the server.

19. (Currently amended)   The system of claim 15, wherein each monitoring system monitors a unique <u>communications protocol </u>port of the server.

20. (Currently amended)   A program product stored on a recordable medium for communicating over a network, which when executed comprises:

       program code for managing a set of rules for classifying messages<u>, wherein a classification of a message determines how the message is routed for processing at a server</u>;

       program code for providing the set of rules to a client; and

       program code for separately monitoring a plurality of ports on a server for classified messages.

21. (Original) The program product of claim 20, further comprising program code for classifying messages on a client.

22. (Original) The program product of claim 20, further comprising program code for periodically requesting the set of rules from the server.